

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resource Commission**

ITEM

11

DECISION

TOPIC

Natural Resource Based Business Opportunities Grant Program

Commission approval is requested for the committee recommendations for the natural Resource Based Business Opportunities Grant (NRBBOG) Program. A total of \$237,500 was appropriated from the DNR environment First Fund for the development of project related to natural resource based business opportunities; an additional \$12,500 was made available to the Department to administer the program, for a total appropriation of \$250,000 for this program. Local Resource Conservation and Development boards sponsored by county governments or Soil and Water conservation Districts were eligible to receive funding on a competitive basis that the application identified a dollar for dollar or in-kind match.

The Natural Resource Based Business Opportunities Grant Program Review Committee Consisting of Cali Beals (Iowa Department of Economic Development), Lyle Asell (DNR – Director’s Office, and Aron Flickinger (DNR – Forestry Bureau) convened on August 22, 2008, to review a total of 23 RC&D projects requesting \$460,826 in funding. Based upon a competitive scoring system that encourages local economic development involving Iowa’s natural resources and considers impact on the environment with measurable results and well define benchmarks during the life of the project, the Department requests approval of the grants listed below (see attached summary description for each project):

Applicant	Project	Grant Award
Cedar Valley RC&D	Cedar Bridge Park - Recreation Cabin	\$23,900
Cedar Valley RC&D	Straw Bale Building Construction	\$15,000
Geode RC&D	Cabins Amenities for Natural Resource Areas in Southeast Iowa	\$25,000
Golden Hills RC&D	Turin Man Interpretive Panel Installation	\$5,000
Iowa Lakes RC&D	Watchable Wildlife Implementation for NW Iowa	\$5,000
Iowa League of RC&Ds	The Iowa Food Cooperative: A web-based system for selling local foods year around to benefit Iowa farmers and consumers	\$25,000
Limestone Bluffs RC&D	Scenic Byway Theme & Loop Tours Marketing Project	\$25,000
Northeast Iowa RC&D	Carpenter's Edge native Wood Recovery and Recycling Project	\$25,000
Northeast Iowa RC&D	Developing Historic Forest Resources as a Business Opportunity	\$6,500
Northeast Iowa RC&D	Exploring Northeast Iowa's Natural Resources	\$7,500
Pathfinders RC&D	Selling Solitude in Wapello County	\$25,000
Total		\$187,900

The projects described in the table below represent the unsuccessful grant applicants. They are provided for the Commission's information but are not recommended for funding at this time. The Department plans to provide another opportunity to apply for non-obligated funds from this grant cycle and any unexpended funds under the program to date in fall of 2008, at which time the unsuccessful applicants may reapply for consideration.

Applicant	Project	Grant Request
Chariton Valley RC&D	Country Roads Strawberries & Produce	\$25,000
Geode RC&D	Des Moines County Home: Green Components for Re-use	\$5,000
Golden Hills RC&D	Biovance Iowa – Business Start Up	\$25,000
Iowa Heartland RC&D	Dan-D Farms: Building a Model for Successful Agri-tourism	\$25,000
Iowa Valley RC&D	Agricultural Food Heritage Multi-media Tour of the Iowa and Cedar Valleys	\$25,000
Limestone Bluffs RC&D	Maquoketa Art Experience	\$25,000
Limestone Bluffs RC&D	Retaining a River Based Business in Bellevue	\$25,000
Prairie Partners RC&D	Sustainable Building Using Whole Tree Architecture	\$20,550
Prairie Rivers RC&D	Promoting Savanna Restoration in Central Iowa	\$22,500
Prairie Winds RC&D	Winding Creek Gardens Vegetable Production Facility	\$23,632
Prairie Winds RC&D	Townsend Winery and Vineyards	\$25,000
Southern Iowa RC&D	Southern Iowa Resource Conservation & Development Area Regional Vision and Strategic Action Plan	\$15,618
Total		\$262,300

Diane Ford-Shivvers, Deputy Division Administrator
 Conservation and Recreation Division
 September 11, 2008

Attachment: NRBBOG Summary Descriptions

Natural Resource Based Business Opportunities Grant Program FY 2009
Summaries of Recommended Projects

Cedar Bridge Park Recreation Cabin – Cedar Valley RC&D will construct one rustic seasonal cabin of green building technology in partnership with Cedar County Conservation Board in the new Cedar Bridge Park Campground. This project will utilize \$23,900 in NRBBOG funds and in-kind match of \$23,900.

Straw Bale Building Construction – Cedar Valley RC&D will partner with Alternative Building Concepts to promote the use of straw bale technology for insulation in pole building construction. This project will utilize \$15,000 in NRBBOG funds and in-kind match of \$15,000.

Cabins Amenities for Natural Resource Areas in SE Iowa – Geode RC&D will construct one cabin each in partnership with Lee and Des Moines County Conservation Boards. They will be handicap accessible and promote additional green building components through the utilization of recycled furnishings and materials. This project will utilize \$25,000 in NRBBOG funds and in-kind match of \$37,510.

Turin Man Interpretive Panel Installation – Golden Hills RC&D will work to develop and install two interpretive panels near the Turin Man prehistoric archaeological site of the oldest prehistoric human remains discovered in Iowa. The Turin Man site will serve as one item on a cultural resources itinerary for the Loess Hills National Scenic Byway. This project will utilize \$5,000 in NRBBOG funds and in-kind match of \$5,556.

Watchable Wildlife Implementations for NW Iowa – Iowa Lakes RC&D will continue its efforts to assess nature viewing resources in northwest Iowa. End products include a website, photo gallery, loop tours featuring natural locations in NW Iowa and “You Tube” videos highlighting nature tourism in NW Iowa. This project will utilize \$5,000 in NRBBOG funds and in-kind match of \$18,700.

The Iowa Food Cooperative: A web-based system for selling local foods year around to benefit Iowa farmers and consumers – Iowa League of RC&Ds will link Iowa farmers with consumers through a web-based year-around food ordering system. Coordinated by Practical Farmers of Iowa, this web-based system will give participating farmers an efficient, new way to sell their sustainably-grown products and reach more consumers. The Iowa Food Cooperative will utilize advice and assistance from the already existing Nebraska and Oklahoma Food Cooperatives. This project will utilize \$25,000 in NRBBOG funds and in-kind match of \$211,590.

Scenic Byway Theme & Loop Tours Marketing Project – Limestone Bluffs RC&D will work with byway corridor communities to identify existing natural resources and other assets in the Grant Wood and Delaware Crossing Scenic Byways Corridors in Jackson, Jones and Delaware Counties. This inventory will be used to develop a website and produce complimentary guidebooks for theme tours as destinations for local and regional travelers. This project will utilize \$25,000 in NRBBOG funds along with \$52,150 in federal funds through National Scenic Byway program administered through Iowa Department of Transportation and in-kind match of \$6,300.

Carpenter's Edge Native Wood Recovery and Recycling Project – Northeast Iowa RC&D will work with Carpenter's Edge Carpentry to recover scraped Iowa hardwood trim destined for the landfill or grounding and process it for re-sale as a value added trim product. Project area will include Allamakee, Buchanan, Clayton, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek Counties. This project will utilize \$25,000 in NRBBOG funds and in-kind match of \$80,625.

Developing Historic Forest Resources as a Business Opportunity – Northeast Iowa RC&D will partner with Glenwood Log Houses to complete an inventory of the location and condition of historic log houses in Winneshiek and Allamakee Counties. This project will utilize \$6,500 in NRBBOG funds and in-kind match of \$6,500.

Exploring Northeast Iowa's Natural Resources – Northeast Iowa RC&D will work in partnership with Northeast Iowa Tourism Association to develop an informational booklet as a guide for hundreds of high quality natural resource destinations in a six county area of Northeast Iowa. Counties included in the project area are Allamakee, Buchanan, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek Counties. This project will utilize \$7,500 in NRBBOG funds and in-kind match of \$10,275.

Selling Solitude in Wapello County – Pathfinders RC&D will construct one cabin in partnership with Wapello County Conservation Board at Pioneer Ridge Nature Area near Ottumwa. This project will utilize \$25,000 in NRBBOG funds and in-kind match of \$57,971.